

Chapter 20 Medals And Awards

When appearing before a military court, with military lay members, it is a good idea for advocates to know the experience of the people sitting on the “jury”. One will know that they have some man-management experience, but a good clue to their broader, military, experience, can be gleaned from the medals they wear.¹⁰⁶⁹ Gallantry medals are important to recognise. The list shows the most commonly seen medals and awards and is not exhaustive by any means. In addition to the medals below, some Service personnel may wear NATO campaign medals, or authorised foreign government medals. See Appendix C Medals, Honours And Awards for images.

The categories set out below are: Gallantry, Operational, Non-Operational and Honours.¹⁰⁷⁰

GALLANTRY AWARDS

The hierarchy of **gallantry, leadership and bravery** awards for **active operations** in presence of the enemy:

Table 18 Gallantry Award

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Level 1 | Victoria Cross | | |
| Level 2 | Distinguished Service Order | Conspicuous Gallantry Cross | |
| Level 3 | Distinguished Service Cross | Military Cross | Distinguished Flying Cross |
| Level 4 | Mention in Despatches | | |

The hierarchy of gallantry, leadership and bravery awards for **non active operations** not in the presence of the enemy:

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Level 1 | George Cross | | |
| Level 2 | George Medal | | |
| Level 3 | Queen’s Gallantry Medal | Air Force Cross | |
| Level 4 | Queen’s Commendation for Bravery | Queen’s Commendation for Bravery in the air | |

Victoria Cross – This is the top award for gallantry and may be awarded to all ranks of the services and civilians for gallantry in the presence of the enemy. It may be awarded posthumously. The VC is made from the bronze of Russian guns captured at Sebastopol, though modern research suggests that Chinese guns may have been used at various times. Whatever its compound, the intrinsic value of this medal is exceptionally high.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medals-campaigns-descriptions-and-eligibility#ls-and-gcm-army>> for full guidance

¹⁰⁷⁰ Acknowledgment to Stephen Straford’s internet site: British Military & Criminal History 1900 to 1999, Royal British Legion, the Ministry of Defence Medals: campaigns, descriptions and eligibility, and the Official Website of the British Monarchy.

Distinguished Service Order - The DSO was instituted originally to reward junior officers in the Army for distinguished service or acts of gallantry against the enemy. While the Order of the Bath had been available for senior officers and the Distinguished Conduct Medal for the other ranks, no award below the level of the Victoria Cross (VC) had existed for junior officers. The DSO was also made available to junior officers of the other services.

After the 1993 review, the DSO ceased to be awarded for *gallantry* and was replaced by the new all service, all ranks Conspicuous Gallantry Cross at the level below the VC. Although theoretically available to all ranks, the DSO, now awarded for distinguished leadership during active operations against the enemy, is likely to be awarded only to the more senior officer ranks.

Conspicuous Gallantry Cross - Available to all ranks of the RN, RM, Army, and RAF in recognition of acts of conspicuous gallantry during active operations against the enemy. Instituted in 1993 as part of the review of gallantry awards, the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross replaced 3 previous awards: the Distinguished Service Order for gallantry (issued to officers), the Distinguished Conduct Medal (Army other ranks) and the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (RN other ranks). When the medal ribbon is worn on its own, a silver rosette worn on the ribbon indicates each bar (additional award of the same medal).

Distinguished Service Cross – Since 1993, the DSC became available to all ranks of all services for exemplary gallantry at sea in presence of the enemy. It is at a level below the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross and is at the equivalent level to the **Military Cross** (for exemplary gallantry on land) and the **Distinguished Flying Cross** (for exemplary gallantry in the air).

Distinguished Flying Cross - Available to all ranks of all services for exemplary gallantry in the air in presence of the enemy. It is at a level below the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross and is at the equivalent level to the Distinguished Service Cross (for exemplary gallantry at sea) and the Military Cross (for exemplary gallantry on land).

Military Cross – Awarded for exemplary gallantry during active combat operations on land against the enemy.

Mention in Despatches – The oldest form of recognition of gallantry within the UK Armed Forces. It is now reserved for gallantry during active operations. Recipients do not receive a medal or insignia at an Investiture, but instead their citation is published in the London Gazette. It was awarded to those whose name appeared in an official report written by a superior officer for gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy. Mentions between the Wars and after 1945 were to be the new single oak leaf emblem worn on the appropriate General Service ribbon. This continued until 1993 when four new emblems were introduced. The MID single oak leaf was retained but in silver; and awarded only for bravery. The meritorious equivalent was the old multiple oak leaf, now in silver, and called the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

(QCVS). The laurel leaf in silver was retained for the Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB); no change except in the name and applicability to the forces. Finally, a new emblem was introduced in the form of a silver RAF eagle in flight to denote a Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air (QCBA). All are worn on the appropriate medal/ribbon or directly on the coat after all ribbons, if no medal applies for that award.¹⁰⁷¹

OPERATIONAL AWARDS

George Cross - The highest gallantry award for civilians, the GC is also awarded to military personnel for those acts for which military honours would not normally be granted, such as acts of gallantry not in the presence of the enemy.

George Medal - Awarded to civilians for acts of great bravery but not so outstanding as to merit consideration for the George Cross. The George Medal is also awarded to military personnel for those acts for which military honours would not normally be granted, such as acts of great bravery not in presence of the enemy.

Queen's Gallantry Medal - Can be awarded to civilians or military personnel "for exemplary acts of bravery."

Air Force Cross - For gallantry in the air for non operational actions. All ranks of the RN, RM, Army and RAF are eligible, in recognition of exemplary gallantry in the air on non active operations. It is at the same level as the **Queen's Gallantry Medal**, which is awarded for the same degree of gallantry on land or at sea.

Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB) – A commendation for bravery in which there was a risk to the holder's life. The Royal Air Force equivalent is the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air. It is worn on the appropriate medal ribbon or directly on the coat after all ribbons, if no medal applies for that award.

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service – An award for valuable service either when on operations or when in support of operations. It can be awarded to civilians supporting military ops.

Gulf Medal (1990 to 1991) - The Medal with clasp '16 Jan to 28 Feb 1991' was awarded for 7 days continuous service in the theatre of operations as defined in the regulations between these dates, which signify the dates of the actual war.

¹⁰⁷¹ British Legion 'What Are 'Mentions in Despatches'?
<https://support.britishlegion.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/247/~-/medals-faqs>

The medal with clasp '2 Aug 1990' was awarded to the members of the Kuwait Liaison Team who were in Kuwait on this date.

The medal alone was awarded for 30 days continuous service in the area of operations as defined in the regulations between 2 August 1990 and 7 March 1991. Full details are laid out in DCI Gen 185/91.

Afghanistan Operational Service Medal (formerly the OSM for Op Veritas)

Gulf War: foreign awards - The governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia struck and issued medals to the allied personnel who had taken part in the liberation of Kuwait. Known as the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal and the Saudi Arabian Medal for the liberation of Kuwait, permission was granted for British Service personnel to accept, but not wear, the medals.

Iraq medal, 2003 onwards - The Iraq Medal was awarded for 30 days continuous service on Op Telic in specified qualifying areas of the Middle East between specified dates during the build up to and the conflict in 2003.

The Iraq Medal is now awarded for 30 days continuous service on Op Telic in Iraq. Air crew are awarded the Medal for 10 sorties into Iraq.

Accumulated Campaign Service Medal 2011 - To be awarded the ACSM 2011 an individual must hold a qualifying operational medal such as the GSM (eg. Northern Ireland, Air Ops Iraq), an OSM (eg. Sierra Leone or Afghanistan), the Iraq Medal or other specifically designated multinational campaign medals, have completed more than 24 months (720 days) campaign service and be serving on or after 1 Jan 2008. Bars are to be awarded for each additional period of 720 days approved operational service. A month is defined as 30 days and part months may be accumulated.

Operational Service Medal - Since its introduction, 3 OSMs have been issued: for service in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although each OSM will look the same, separate ribbons will denote each separate award. A clasp may be awarded with the OSM to signify service in a more dangerous area or period of conflict.

Operational Service Medal for the Democratic Republic of Congo - introduced on 1 January 2000 and at the same time the GSM was discontinued, with the exception of the award of the GSM for Northern Ireland.

Operational Service Medal for Sierra Leone - Awarded for service on any of 5 operations in Sierra Leone or the Joint Operational Area which included Senegal. Awarded for either 14, 21, 30 or 45 days continuous or accumulated service required between certain specified dates on either Op Palliser, Basilica or Silkman. Also awarded to those deployed on Op Maidenly or Op Barras on specified dates.

NON-OPERATIONAL AWARDS

Cadet Forces Medal - awarded to officers and uniformed adult instructors in recognition of long service of proved capacity in the Cadet Forces. 12 years reckonable service is required for award of the medal. 6 years further service is required for award of each subsequent clasp. Prior to 1991, 8 years service was required for the clasp. Service after the age of 18 as a cadet will count up to a maximum of 4 years. Service in the Reserve Forces, Regular Forces, OTC and University Air Squadrons which has not been used as qualifying service towards any other medal (eg LS and GCM or VRSM) may be used towards CFM up to a maximum of 3 years.

The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal - Awarded to personnel of the Regular, Reserve and Cadet forces who were in effective service on 6 February 2002, who had completed 5 full calendar years reckonable service and were properly enlisted on or before 7 February 1997.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal - awarded to those in the Armed Forces, emergency services and prison service personnel who completed five full calendar years of service on 6 February 2012. The Medal is worn on the left breast, immediately before The Long Service & Good Conduct Medal / Queen's Ambulance Service Medal, and in date order with all other Coronation or Jubilee Medals.

Volunteer Reserves Service Medal - The VRSM was instituted with effect from 1 April 1999 to replace the separate medals that used to be issued to personnel of the separate Reserve Forces. These were the Royal Naval Reserve Decoration and Reserve Long Service and Good Conduct Medal for the Royal Naval and Royal Marine Reserve, the Territorial Decoration and Efficiency Medal (Territorial) for the Army Reserve (formerly the Territorial Army) and the Air Efficiency Award for the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

The VRSM is now issued to both officers and other ranks of the Royal Naval and Royal Marine Reserve, the Army Reserve (formerly the Territorial Army) and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force who have served after 31 March 1999. Reserve personnel shall be eligible for award of the VRSM after 10 years reckonable service in the Reserve Forces, provided that they have earned training bounty as required by their obligatory training commitment as defined in individual service regulations in 9 out of the 10 qualifying years.

Long Service And Good Conduct Medal: As this medal requires the recommendation of the individuals' commanding officer, it can only be awarded to serving personnel. Only those servicemen who are in every way worthy of the distinction and whose conduct has been irreproachable throughout their service should be recommended. A serviceman who, subsequent to award of the medal, goes on to complete a further 15 years service shall be eligible for award of the clasp to the LS and GCM provided that the conduct/discipline criteria have

been met. There are a number of offences/misconduct which would normally preclude award of the LS and GCM.

The criteria for each Service are as follows:

Royal Navy: An other rank who completes 15 years reckonable service from date of attestation or age 17½, whichever is later, and is a holder of all 3 good conduct badges, shall be eligible for consideration provided that their character has continuously not been lower than 'very good'. A naval officer shall be eligible for award of the LS and GCM if 12 or more of the 15 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met. An officer shall be eligible for award of the clasp if 22 or more of the 30 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met.

Army: A soldier who completes 15 years reckonable service from date of attestation or age 17½, whichever is later, shall be eligible for consideration, though there are a number of offences/misconduct which would normally preclude award of the LS and GCM. Normally, this means a regimental conduct sheet completely clear of any disciplinary entry. An Army officer shall be eligible for award of the LS and GCM if 12 or more of the 15 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met. An officer shall be eligible for award of the clasp if 22 or more of the 30 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met.

Royal Air Force: From 1 April 2001 an airman who has not yet completed 8 years qualifying service (ie was attested or aged 17½ after 1 April 1993) will become eligible only after 15 years service with consecutive conduct assessments of 'exemplary'.¹⁰⁷² An RAF officer shall be eligible for award of the LS and GCM if 12 or more of the 15 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met. An officer shall be eligible for award of the clasp if 22 or more of the 30 years service has been in the ranks and provided that the other criteria have been met.

HONOURS¹⁰⁷³

Companion of the Bath - awarded to senior officers of the Armed Services, as well as to a small number of civil servants. Post nominal letters are CB.

Commander of the Order of the British Empire - Valuable service is the only criterion for the award, and the Order is now used to reward service in a wide range of useful activities. The holder uses the post-nominal letters CBE.

¹⁰⁷² Offences such as theft, drink driving, ABH or GBH, fraud or drug offences would exclude the individual from eligibility. See §11 to APPENDIX 28C, to QRs (Air Force).

¹⁰⁷³ See JSP 761

Officer of the Order of the British Empire – awarded to those who have performed very worthy service. Post-nominal letters are OBE.

Member of the Order of the British Empire – Awarded for worthy service. Post-nominal letters are MBE.

British Empire Medal - Reintroduced in 2012, this rewards a sustained, local contribution or innovative, high-impact work of a relatively short duration (eg 3 to 4 years).

Appendix C Medals, Honours And Awards

Gallantry on Active Operations in presence of the enemy¹¹¹¹

Table 20 Medals



Victoria Cross



Distinguished Service Order



Conspicuous Gallantry Cross



Distinguished Service Cross



Military Cross



Distinguished Flying Cross



Mention in Despatches

¹¹¹¹ The Royal Family website: <<https://www.royal.uk/military-honours-and-awards>>; National Archives: <<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-military-gallantry-medals/>>; Medals: campaigns, descriptions and eligibility <<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/medals-campaigns-descriptions-and-eligibility#decorations-gallantry-and-distinguished-conduct-medals>>.

Gallantry for non active operations not in the presence of the enemy



George Cross



George Medal



Queen's Gallantry Medal



Air Force Cross



Queen's Commendation
for Bravery



Queen's Commendation
for Bravery in the air

Operational Awards



Queen's Commendation
for Valuable Service



Accumulated Campaign
Service Medal 2011



Gulf Medal (1990 to 1991)



Operational Service Medal
for
Democratic Republic of
Congo



Operational Service Medal
for Sierra Leone



Operational Service Medal
Afghanistan

Non-Operational Awards



Cadet Forces Medal



Queen's Diamond Jubilee
Medal



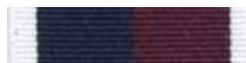
Queen's Golden Jubilee
Medal



Long Service And Good



Long Service And Good



Long Service And Good

Conduct (LS&GC) (Navy)

Conduct (LS&GC) (Army)

Conduct (LS&GC) (Air Force)



Volunteer Reserves
Service Medal

Honours



Commander of the Bath
(CB)



Commander of the Order
of the British Empire
(CBE)



Officer of the Order of the
British Empire (OBE)



Member of the Order of the
British Empire (MBE)



British Empire Medal
(BEM)

Non-UK Awards



NATO Medal